



SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS

Mountain West

Survive Tough First Half and Become Contenders

SAN DIEGO STATE BIO

National Championships - 0



Mountain West Championships: **3**
(Last: **2016**)

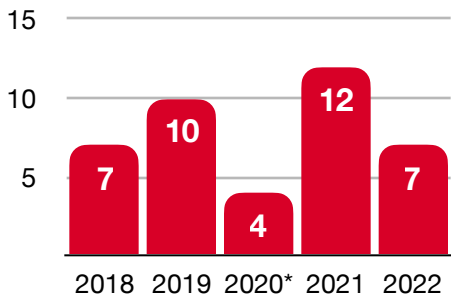
Location: **San Diego, CA**

All-Time Record: **358-274-8**

2022 Results: **7-6**
Lost in Hawaii Bowl

Head Coach: **Brady Hoke**
6th Year (36-24)

5-YEAR WIN TREND



Snapdragon Stadium (35,000)

In recent memory, when the Aztecs have had their most successful seasons (double-digit wins and Mountain West championship contention), San Diego State has dominated on the ground and stifled opposing offenses with their playmaking defense. While the second part of that equation rang true in 2022, there was a noticeable lack of production in the run game and the Aztecs were on the wrong end of the turnover margin for just the first time since 2018. Some of the drop-off was expected from an offense returning just five starters in 2022. Greg Bell was on pace for a 1,000-yard season in 2020 and actually did run for 1,091 yards in 2021. San Diego State struggled to replace him in 2022 and the team's overall rush yards dipped from 175 per game to 143 in 2022.

No one player emerged as the clear cut starter last season but, on the other hand, several running backs gained experience (five rushers with 50 or more carries) and three of those players (including quarterback **Jalen Mayden**) return in 2023. **Jaylon Armstead** offers potential and is the team's leading return in terms of yardage (313) and yards per carry (6.0). **Kenan Christon** brings back 71 carries and 261 yards from last season. **Cam Davis** added 155 yards and makes up the third part of a running back trio that will likely serve as run as a committee again in 2023. The offensive line should be improved which will only help matters for the ground game. **Cade Bennett** was a second-team All-Mountain-West guard after transferring in from Oklahoma State and **Brandon Crenshaw-Dickson** has 26 starts at tackle over the last two seasons.

Virginia Tech transfer Braxton Burmeister earned the starting role at quarterback but completed only 50% of his passes and had just 263 yards passing through parts of five games as the Aztecs fell to 2-3 to start the season. **Kyle Crum** played in the loss to Utah but completed only 5 of his 16 passes for just 53 yards. **Jalen Mayden** was eventually handed the reins and he did not disappoint. He nearly equaled San Diego State's entire passing production for the season when he threw for 322 yards in a win against Hawaii and he started the remaining seven games of the season including the Hawaii Bowl. Interceptions were a bit of an issue for Hayden (including three in a close loss in the bowl game) but a full offseason to work as the established starter should guide improvement. The Aztecs brought in their all-time leading passer Ryan Lindley (12,690 yards from 2008-2011) as the new offensive coordinator who while Mayden will need to learn a new offense he's learning from one of the best.

The Aztecs must replace their top two targets Tyrell Shavers and Jesse Matthews. **Mekhi Shaw** caught 29 passes for 349 yards and three touchdowns, which was tied for the team high. **Mark Redman** is one of the most productive tight ends in the conference and hauled in 21 passes for 233 yards and a pair of touchdowns. Running back Christon did take a screen pass 73-yards to the house in the bowl game and had eight other catches on the season.

Rocky Long (SDSU head coach from 2011-2019) is one of the most brilliant defensive minds in college football and is currently the defensive coordinator at Syracuse. Brady Hoke stepped into the head coaching role in 2020 and brought in defensive coordinator Kurt Mattix and, to their credit, there hasn't been much of a drop-off defensively even with Long's departure a few years ago. Hoke's defense has allowed 30 or more points only seven times in the last three seasons. There's some rebuilding to do on this year's unit, especially on the line. Michael Shawcroft and Jonah Tavai combined for 17 of the Aztecs' 29 sacks and Keshawn Banks, Justus Tavai, and Caden McDonald added nine more. **Cooper McDonald** transferred in from Washington last season and is he lone returner on the defensive line although **Garret Fountain** did play in every game last season. The secondary is arguably the strength of the defense with **Cedarious Barfield** and **Davaughn Celestine** back at safety and **Dezjohn Malone** and **Noah Avinger** back at cornerback.













The Bottom Line: In order to improve upon last year's win total, the Aztecs will have to navigate through a rigorous early season schedule. A week zero matchup against Ohio is far from a "give me" game and a four game stretch against UCLA, Oregon State, Boise State, and Air Force is pretty brutal. If the Aztecs can run the ball effectively they'll control time of possession and field position and will grind their way to more victories.

Projection: 7-5 (4th in Mountain West)

2022 Statistics

Points Scored	Rush Yards	Pass Yards	Turnover Margin
21.5	143.4	181.5	-5
108th in FBS	72nd in FBS	117th in FBS	T-101st in FBS
Points Allowed	Rush YDS Allowed	Pass YDS Allowed	
20.5	113.8	208.8	
19th in FBS	20th in FBS	39th in FBS	

2023 San Diego State Schedule

Week	Date	Team
0	Sat, Aug 26	 vs. Ohio
1	Sat, Sept 2	 vs. Idaho State
2	Sat, Sept 9	 vs. UCLA
3	Sat, Sept 16	 @ Oregon State
4	Fri, Sept 22	 vs. Boise State
5	Sat, Sept 30	 @ Air Force
6	Bye Week	
7	Sat, Oct 14	 @ Hawaii
8	Sat, Oct 21	 vs. Nevada
9	Bye Week	
10	Sat, Nov 4	 vs. Utah State
11	Sat, Nov 11	 @ Colorado State
12	Sat, Nov 18	 @ San Jose State
13	Sat, Nov 25	 vs. Fresno State

Conference Games in Bold

KEY GAMES

Sat, Sept 9: vs. UCLA - The last time the Aztecs and Bruins faced one another San Diego State pulled off a 23-14 upset in the Rose Bowl. This season the Bruins come to Snapdragon and bring with them a highly skilled but unproven freshman quarterback. Could the Aztec defense frustrate him and claim another victory?

Sat, Sept 22: vs. Boise State - The Broncos tied the all-time series at 4-4 apiece with last season's 35-13 victory. QB Mayden wasn't starting yet, so this year's meeting will almost certainly be more competitive.

Sat, Nov 25: vs. Fresno State - These two in-state schools have faced one another 61 times over the last century (first meeting in 1923). The Bulldogs have claimed the last two games by a combined 14 points.

KEY PLAYERS

Jalen Mayden - QB

Mayden has had quite the journey to become a starting quarterback in the FBS. He started his career way back in 2018 with Mississippi State and was ranked the second-best dual-threat quarterback out of Texas. He never found much of an opportunity to start at QB and actually played safety for the first few games of the 2022 season and recorded nine tackles! He eventually had his chance to shine at quarterback and went 6-3 as a starter and he's still elusive as a runner.



Jaylon Armstead - RB

The Aztecs have a storied history of running backs including the NCAA's all-time leading rusher Donnel Humphrey (6,405 yards). Could Armstead be the next great back? He showed glimpses last season including a 72 yard game against UNLV but had five or fewer carries in five of his seven appearances.



2022 RESULTS (7-6)

Arizona (L 20-38)

Idaho State (W 38-7)

@ Utah (L 7-35)

Toledo (W 17-14)

@ Boise State (L 13-35)

Hawaii (W 16-14)

@ **Nevada (W 23-7)**

@ Fresno State (L 28-32)

UNLV (W 14-10)

San Jose State (W 43-27)

@ **New Mexico (W 34-10)**

Air Force (L 3-13)

Middle Tennessee (L 23-25)

AZTECS

RECRUITING

2023 Class Ranking

86th

(Via 24/7 Sports)